



# **The Youth Report 2000**

**A magazine  
for 11 to 14teen**

The  
  
**Children's**  
Commission

WHY SHOULD I READ THIS?	1
BEING A TEEN	3
FEELING GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF	5
EVERYONE'S DIFFERENT	10
NO BULLYING ZONE	13
MAKING SURE EVERYONE BELONGS	16
ADULTS AND KIDS TOGETHER	22
WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR TIME?	25
CONCLUSION	27
QUESTIONNAIRE	28
WORDSEARCH	29
CONTACT INFORMATION (BACK COVER)	30

# TEEN DRAGON

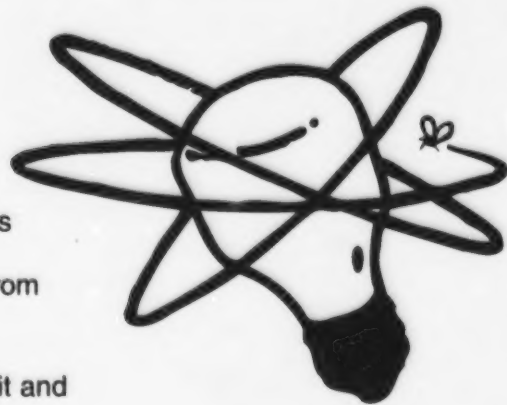
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# Why Should I Read This??!



- ✱ has tons of great ideas
- ✱ has stories from people from age 11 to 14
- ✱ is full of websites to visit and people to talk to
- ✱ shows you how to get help if you need it
- ✱ has a WordSearch puzzle
- ✱ tells you how you can have more say in your communities
- ✱ and because more than 1200 pre-teens and teens participated in making this magazine!



So enough about why you should read this magazine, and on to the pictures and "thanks" to the many 11 to 14 year olds who took time to share their ideas!



ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

# Thank you

TO THE FOLLOWING SCHOOLS  
AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT  
PARTICIPATED:



## Elementary Schools

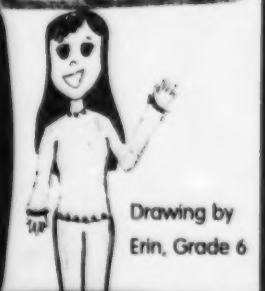
Ferris Elementary, Richmond  
Anne McClymont Elementary, Kelowna  
Macaulay Elementary, Victoria  
George Jay Elementary, Victoria  
Quadra Elementary, Victoria  
Sowchea Elementary, Fort St. James  
Fort Fraser Elementary, Fort Fraser

## Junior Secondary Schools

J N Burnett Secondary, Richmond  
Cambie Secondary, Richmond  
McMath Secondary, Richmond  
Constable Neil Bruce, Kelowna  
Reynolds Secondary, Victoria  
Colquitz Junior Secondary, Victoria  
McKim Middle School, Kimberley  
Springwood Middle School, Parksville  
Qualicum Beach Middle School, Qualicum Beach  
Oceanside Middle School, Parksville  
Nechako Valley Secondary, Vanderhoof

## Organizations that Participated:

Urban Native Youth Association, Vancouver  
Broadway Youth Resource Centre, Vancouver  
Victoria Association for Community Living, Victoria



Drawing by  
Erin, Grade 6

## Focus Group Participants



# Being a Teen

## Poem

Responsibilities, homework and watching TV shows

Being a teen is reading magazines and buying new clothes

Being a teen is having freedom and consequences

Being a teen is feeling hate and love

Friends and family are important to teens

Being a teen is discovering new things about life

Being a teen is telling secrets and hanging out

Being a teen is confusing and wonderful

(Grade 8)

## THE TOP 10 GOOD THINGS ABOUT BECOMING/BEING A TEEN



Driving

Going to PG 13 movies

More freedom and  
independence

More responsibility  
More respect from  
adults

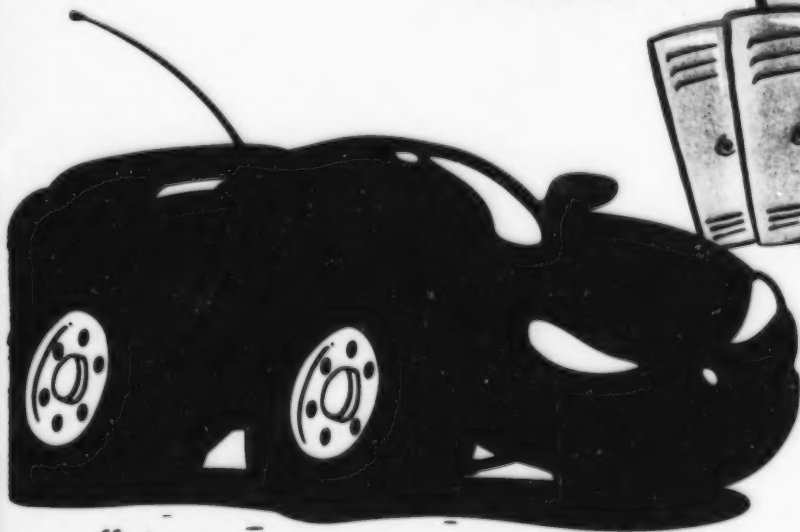
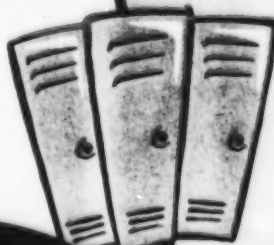
Having a locker

Dating

Going to high school

Having a job

Parties



“ I think it is going to be really fun being a teenager because you can do so many new things that you couldn't when you were younger. Like eventually I will be able to drive a car, we get to go to a new school, and we get to have lockers! (having lockers might not seem like much, but when you have a desk for 8 years it's kind of exciting). ”

(Grade 8)



*"I think I would enjoy being a teenager! Going to parties, getting a drivers license, getting a job, having a boyfriend and staying out late. But some bad things I would like to skip in being a teenager are peer pressure and drugs."*

*(By a girl who can't wait to be a teenager!! Age 11 going on 12)*



*"Being a teenager is quite fun sometimes. First of all, you have more privileges than a child and more freedom with less worries than an adult. You could play and have more fun than adults but you also have to listen to them."*

*(Grade 8)*

## ***Peer Pressure***

*"It'll help if people didn't have to worry about sounding stupid in front of their friends. Peer pressure is a big factor of teenage life. It causes people to do things they don't want to and regret it later on. They get hurt and their self-esteem drops, along with their confidence."*

*(Grade 8)*

Some of you said that all the alcohol and drug posters in the world wouldn't stop a person from using alcohol and drugs if they have low self-esteem. You told us that when a teen has low self-esteem, it's really hard to say "no"—even if you don't want to do alcohol or drugs, you really want to fit in.

There are lots of interesting resources on peer pressure and alcohol and drug abuse throughout this magazine. A good place to start is the Kids Help Phone. **(Read on and you'll find out more!)**



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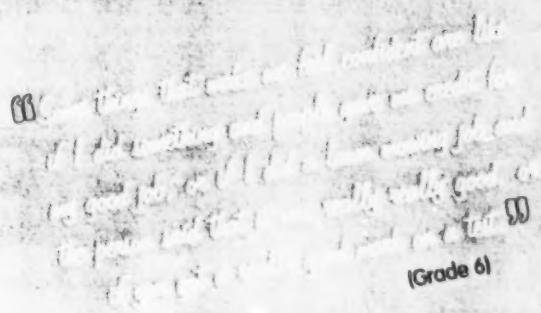
HALL  
PASS

getting good grades  
having more and better friends  
having encouragement from family and friends  
feeling welcomed by your community

having more and better friends

having encouragement from family and friends

feeling welcomed by your community



*"Things that would help me feel more confident about myself would be that my friends don't criticize my heritage and the things I do to show 'who I am', and also when people really like me and they are not pretending to like me. A good 'hello' from someone or a compliment would brighten up my day."* (Grade 8)

*"I would feel more confident in myself if I found friends that I could laugh, cry, and just have fun with."* (Grade 6)

## **Poem**

As a teen, happiness, loneliness, sadness and laughter are always here.

Happiness is as lovely as summer

Sadness is as cold as December

Loneliness is like a windy April

Laughter is like a merry and jolly January

A teen will experience many things and shed a lot of tears

I am a teen and happiness and laughter does not always come to me.

(Grade 8)

### **Some of you are going through a tough time.**

*"I thought that when I was a teenager I would wear the coolest clothes, have lots of friends, perfect face and body, and go to the hottest places. Now that I'm a teenager of 14 I have no friends but lots of enemies. I still wear the same style of clothes and well about that perfect body image, I don't have it. I don't wear make-up because make-up gives me rashes so I can't wear make-up. My life is a living hell trying to get my work done, tests, people bugging me like the whole school and to top it all off I have to sit by someone who hates my guts, calls me names and makes fun of the way I dress."* (Grade 8)

*"Some things that would make me feel more confident about myself are if everybody could just get along, and that at school the more popular kids wouldn't bug me because I'm not in there so-called group 'I'm better than you so I can taunt you'."* (Grade 8)





## People to Call and Websites to Visit

If you are going through a tough time, there are people you can talk to. You can talk to a school counselor, your doctor, peer counselor, or you can also call and talk to a trained counselor at the Kids Help Phone at **1-800-668-6868**. Best of all it's FREE and it's CONFIDENTIAL.

You can visit the Kids Help Phone at <http://kidshelp.sympatico.ca>. This website is full of information about depression, peer pressure, teasing, violence, drugs, eating disorders, dating, communicating with parents and all sorts of other stuff. There are even discussion groups and tips for parents on how to help pre-teens and teens when they are going through a tough time.

## Your Ideas

Here are some ideas from pre-teens and teens on how to feel better about yourself and respect others:

*"Not being bugged about your hair, clothes and the way you look."* (Grade 8)

*"I don't feel that I need to feel more self-confident. The thing that helped me a lot was with my Grade 8 'girls in transitions' group... I think that it should almost be mandatory that every community offer some sort of program to help boys and girls gain self-confidence and knowledge about drugs, abuse, alcohol, and the human body."* (Grade 8)



## Using Resources

Many of you said you know there are adults to talk to and websites to visit, but there are some barriers to doing that:

*It's embarrassing when they call your name over the intercom and everyone knows you have a problem. Why can't they get you between classes or set a time so that you can have more privacy. That would make it easier to go to a counselor.* (Grade 6)

*We talk about stuff like the Kidshelp line in CAPP but I don't think anyone calls. No one wants to tell someone you don't know about your problems and you don't want to go and tell your parents.* (Grade 8)

*I like going on the internet, but I don't think I would go to sites about drugs or whatever cause my mom is always looking at what I'm doing and then she'd freak out because she would think I had a problem.* (Grade 6)

## Ideas

- 1) Get some other students together and talk to the principal or counselor about how you want to help set up a system where you are not called to the office over the intercom.
- 2) Show your parents the website below. It is about internet safety.
- 3) Develop a plan that allows you to go to sites and reassures your parents that you'll be safe while surfing.
- 4) Before you go to the site, you might want to take this **quiz** to see how "internet-proof" you are. It's on the next page.

## People to Call and Websites to Visit



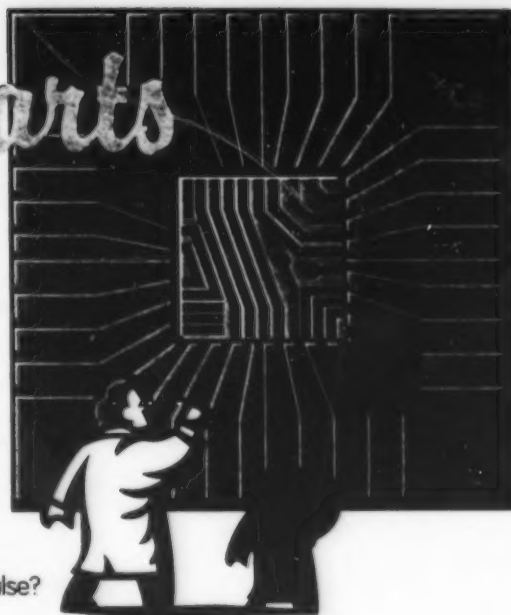
<http://worldkids.net/school/safety/internet/internet.htm>

This site gives you rules for internet safety, "netiquette", as well as information to share with your parents and other adults who want to be part of making sure the internet is fun and interesting for you rather than dangerous.

# Cyber Smarts

(Turn this page upside down and you'll find the answers!)

- 1) You are in a chatroom and someone says they went to the same school as you in Grade 4. You can't remember the person because she moved in the middle of Grade 4, but now she wants to come and visit you. It's safe to give her your address. True or False?
- 2) Giving someone your real name on the Internet is the same as giving your name to someone at school. True or False?
- 3) :) means you are happy. True or False?
- 4) :/ or :-/ means you are not amused by something. True or False?
- 5) The internet is like a big city. Most people are nice and some aren't. True or False?
- 6) Planning to meet another kid you met on the internet is like planning to meet a school friend at the arcade. True or False?
- 7) The internet can be a great place to find confidential answers to questions you are afraid to ask. True or False?
- 8) Telling an adult about a plan to meet someone you've met in a chatroom is a good way to stay safe. True or False?
- 9) Sometimes chatrooms and other places on the internet ask you for information like your real name and address. It's okay to give this information because it's only seen by people who will keep it confidential. True or False?



- 1) FALSE "She" might not even be a "she," "she" could even be an adult "he". A person can decide to be "anyone" on the internet, and you wouldn't give just anyone your name, number and address.
- 2) FALSE The difference is that you know who you're introducing yourself to at school because you can meet them in person.
- 3) TRUE Look at it sideways and you'll see a "happy" face.
- 4) TRUE Look at it sideways and you'll see a "not amused" face.
- 5) TRUE It is a massive city that includes the good and the bad.
- 6) FALSE You've met the kid from school. The "kid" on the internet could be an adult.
- 7) TRUE The Kids Help Phone, for example, has tons of information about violence prevention and how to deal with drugs and depression.
- 8) TRUE The internet is lots of fun and you can meet friends, but people can pretend to be anyone on the internet. That's part of the fun, but it's also part of the danger.
- 9) FALSE Other people CAN view your information.



# Everyone's Different

Drawing by  
Karen, Age 11

*"I know that in this world everything, including us humans, is different. Each one of us is unique and a star in different ways. I know that in our world nobody could ever replace me no matter what. That's what makes me feel special in everyday life."* (Grade 6)

## Body Size

Some of you mentioned lots of concerns about your body and being fat. You talked about being teased because of your bodies.

*"It hurts. I'm new at my school and I get called fat. It hurts. I wish kids could be kinder."* (Grade 6)

We are all born with different bodies and shapes, just like we are born with different colors of hair and skin. Teasing people just makes them feel bad about themselves and might be part of the reason for them going on crazy diets that sometimes make them sick.





## People to Call and Websites to Visit

Here are some people to call and sites to visit if you want to learn more about body image and eating disorders:

Eating Disorder Resource Center **1-800-665-1822**

These people can give you lots of great information about how to prevent eating disorders and where to get help if you think you have an eating disorder.

Call Dial-a-Dietitian at **732-9191** if you live in Vancouver; or, Toll-free anywhere else in BC: **1-800-667-3438**

You can also visit their website which has a ton of information about nutrition at <http://dialadietitian.org>

<http://library.thinkquest.org/15873/mind>

This site will give you lots of interesting information about healthy eating. It also has a checklist to help you, or others, determine if you have an eating disorder.

## DisAbilities

One student with special needs told us about how much it hurts to be teased.

*"Kids might have a problem but they can't help it. Think about how you would like it if YOU were teased because you had a disAbility. I think teachers and principals should be more strict and stop other kids from teasing."* (Age 13)

Another student talked about how frustrating it is when places aren't wheelchair accessible.

*"It's hard to go to the beach cause my wheels get stuck in the sand."* (Age 13)

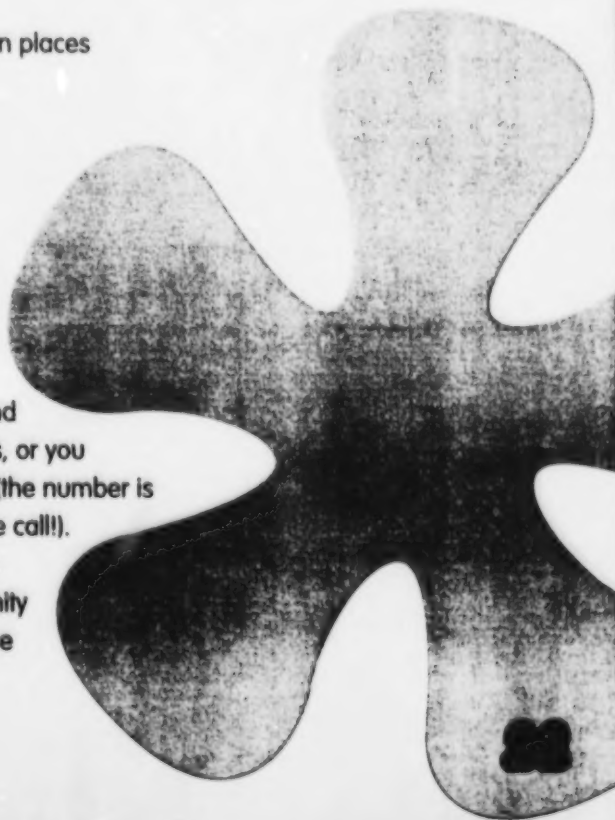


## People to Call and Websites to Visit

If you would like a speaker to talk with you and your friends about how to include kids with disAbilities, or you would just like to learn more, you can call Enquiry BC (the number is on the back of this magazine and it's FREE to make the call!). Ask to be transferred to the Office for Disability Issues. This office will help you find someone in your community to talk about disAbility awareness, and how to stop the bullying of kids with disAbilities.



Drawing by  
Robert, Age 11





This site has lots of stories by kids and teens about what it is like to have a disAbility or a serious illness. They have ideas for what can be done to make them feel more included.

<http://funrsc.fairfield.edu/~jfeitas/contents.html>

This site has interesting information on Braille, and what it is like to be blind or visually impaired.

<http://pittsford.monroe.edu/Schools/Jefferson/Blind/BlindKidsMain.html>

This site has thousands of American Sign Language signs and lots of information about deaf culture.

<http://dww.deafworldweb.org/asi>

## Racism

Racism is based on ignorance and fear of someone who looks different than the person who is being racist. It hurts a lot even if the person being teased doesn't say anything or even laughs at racist jokes being made about their culture.

*Once someone told us that just because his skin was a different color, it doesn't mean he was different—he still had red blood.* (Grade 6)



## People to Call and Websites to Visit

Here are some neat sites to visit that will give you information about First Nations culture and how to fight racism:

BC Human Rights Commission can give you great information about discrimination and how to fight it. They even have speakers who can come to speak with you and your friends:  
**1-800-663-0876.**

The Aboriginal Youth Network (AYN): <http://www.ayn.ca>

Artists Against Racism: <http://www.artistsagainstracism.com>



# No Bullying Zone

Calling people "fag" or "fat" or making comments about the color of their skin or a disability hurts. It hurts so much that some kids stop going to school because they can't stand being harassed anymore. YOU have a lot of power to help stop bullying. Here are some of your ideas:



If you bully people, you're no better than me!

Drawn by  
Catherine, Grade 6

"Stop stereotyping other kids, and throw away any racism or prejudice groups."

(Grade 8)

"Some ways you could protect kids from harm are standing up for them, and don't pick on anyone."

(Grade 8)

"To make everyone feel that they belong and are respected, we could get rid of racism, teasing, sexism, put-downs and any type of discrimination. We could encourage and support everyone to reach for their goals and not to be intimidated. We could also encourage them to do their best and be a part of the community. We could accept everyone and anyone, even if they have green skin and pink hair. We could also help them along the path of success."

(Grade 6)



Respect kids for who they are and don't exclude them because they are not like you—they just have different interests.

(Grade 8)



## Stop Bullying: What Pre-teens and Teens Want Adults To Do:

“Try to stand up for them and help them do things they can't.” (Grade 6)

“Be strict with bullies and make sure they stop.” (Age 11)

“...telling them (kids) how to stay cool and show them how to control it.” (Grade 8)

“When I was in Grade 2 I got beat up by a kid on the school bus. I told the principal and the kid stopped beating me up on the bus, but after a couple of days he would find me at lunch and beat me up. Here they are a lot stricter. I've gotten suspended for fighting.” (Grade 8)

“...Sometimes I would tell an adult if I was being bullied but sometimes they can make the situation worse if they talk to the person bugging you but don't do anything to make sure they stop.” (Grade 8)

“I told my principal that some guys were harassing me and he told me to go to the Constable. I thought he would talk to the Constable or help me more. I had to find the Constable and tell the story again. When you tell an adult, they shouldn't make you go by yourself to tell other adults.” (Age 13)



### People to Call and Websites to Visit

You can call the **Youth Against Violence Line** if you (or someone you know) are a victim of violence. You don't have to give your name or any other personal information. The number to call is toll-free: **1-800-680-4264**.

You can also visit the Youth Against Violence website at  
[http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/besafe/family\\_safety2.htm#youth](http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/besafe/family_safety2.htm#youth)

Through Youth Against Violence, you can also join a youth action team (YAT) or have a team come and talk to you about anti-bullying at your school. YATs are groups of 11 to 20 year olds who give workshops on topics such as conflict resolution and how to deal with bullies.

## Quiz:

### Dealing with Bullies

- 1) Bullies are people who only use physical violence.
- 2) Bullies were often victims of bullies themselves.
- 3) Telling an adult if you are being bullied should not be considered ratting.
- 4) Keeping track of the time and place you were bullied and what happened is a good idea.
- 5) Showing emotions, like crying or yelling, will make a bully feel bad and they'll stop.
- 6) I feel bad when I see someone being teased but there is nothing I can do about it.
- 7) You have a lot of power to stop bullying.
- 8) People who feel like they are appreciated by their school and community have more self-confidence and are less likely to be bullies.

- they can form their own group to prevent and put a stop to bullying.
- 8) TRUE: Teens can phone the Youth Against Violence Line at 1-800-680-4264 or will be fewer bullies. Teens can phone the Youth Against Violence Line at 1-800-680-4264 or will be fewer bullies. Teens can phone the Youth Against Violence Line at 1-800-680-4264 or will be fewer bullies.
- 7) TRUE: You can refuse to laugh at the person being teased, and can support them by telling them it's not their fault, and you can help them go to an adult to stop the bullying.
- 6) FALSE: Bullies usually don't go after a group. Sometimes a group of bullies might form a "wannabe" gang. Whatever you do, don't fight them or react—that's what they want. Ignore them and tell an adult.
- 5) FALSE: Showing emotion is what the bully wants you to do. Ignore the bully and tell an adult.
- 4) TRUE: Having a record makes it easier to tell your story and it helps adults figure out how to deal with the bully.
- 3) TRUE: Telling an adult is protecting yourself and other people. Bullies often pick on more than one person.
- 2) TRUE: Bullies were often victims but it still doesn't give them the right to be a bully.
- 1) FALSE: Bullying includes physical and verbal abuse.

# Making Sure Everyone Belongs



Lots of you said that if kids feel like they belong and have stuff to do, then they won't do the things like drugs, vandalism and bullying.

Here are some ways you said help you feel included:

*I feel included in my community because I help out at National Little League by umpiring and keeping it clean. This makes me feel included because I am helping keep our field clean and letting kids have a fun game. I feel excluded when adults don't take us kids seriously like the other day when my friend phoned a printing shop to see if they could print some brochures and the man asked to speak to an adult instead of talking to my friend.* (Age 12)

*I feel included in my community. When answering these questions I'm letting out information about youth today and how we feel.* (Grade 8)

*I feel included in the community because without the people there is no community and I am one of them.* (Grade 8)

*I feel included when people say hello to me in town in a store. I feel included when people want me to do something for them.* (Grade 6)

*I feel included because the people in my community are very welcoming and very nice.* (Grade 6)

*I feel a part of the community when I do something nice for someone, or do something for the community.* (Grade 6)

*When I go to the store and someone says Hi! to me or holds the door open for me. It makes me feel happy and that I'm not invisible.* (Grade 8)



Some of you said you don't feel respected because it seems like adults expect teens to be bad. You gave an example of going to a store and having the feeling that adults were afraid that you were going to steal. You also talked about how good it feels when adults say hello and aren't afraid of you.

*I feel excluded from my community when adults think that just because you're a kid you're going to do something bad. Like when you walk into a store and just the fact that I'm 12 and wearing a backpack means I'm going to shoplift. The community doesn't feel like a whole, it feels like there's the kids, then the adults. I think the community could get together and do a charity run or something for less fortunate people in the community and Victoria. That would make us seem more like a whole.*

(Grade 6)

*To me being a part of the community is knowing everyone. I feel excluded when there are parents' meetings and no kids meetings. People think you're going to steal stuff, do drugs or other illegal stuff. I think people should treat us fairly. All the bank robbers and serial killers are all adults. Yet they think teens are worse.*

(Grade 8)



*I had to babysit all weekend for my aunt and she didn't pay me. It was too much—I had her son and baby. I told my mom and my aunt still has to pay me, but she hasn't yet. I didn't feel respected.*

(Age 13)

*Adults tend to not ask us about things in the community. Like for instance, I live in a coop (town houses) and we have a playground that is run by the "playground committee" and they spend X amount of dollars on the playground every year on what they think that you would like. But they never actually ask us what we would like—they always just assume that's what we want. So I don't really feel a part of the community around my house. But doing things like this Youth 2000 Report is a start for myself and others alike.*

(Grade 8)



## Communicating with Important Adults in Your Life

Lots of you said communicating with your parents and other adults you trust really helps you gain confidence and feel better about decisions you need to make, and helps you figure out ways to deal with conflicts with peers and adults.



*"Some of the ways I communicate with my parents are writing notes. We sometimes talk, We hug."*

(Grade 6)

*"I just talk to her and she understands everything I say it seems so I can tell her anything."*

(Grade 8)

Some of you wished your communication with your parents was better.

*"Before I entered high school, people told me that I won't talk to my parents anymore after I'm in high school. At that time, I thought they were crazy! How would I never talk to my parents? But it was proved to be true for me and some of my friends too. Once I was in high school, I don't tell my parents my secrets or my problems. I would rather tell my friends. Up till now, I still haven't found a way to keep communicating with my parents because they don't know what we like to talk about and we just have no common topic together."*

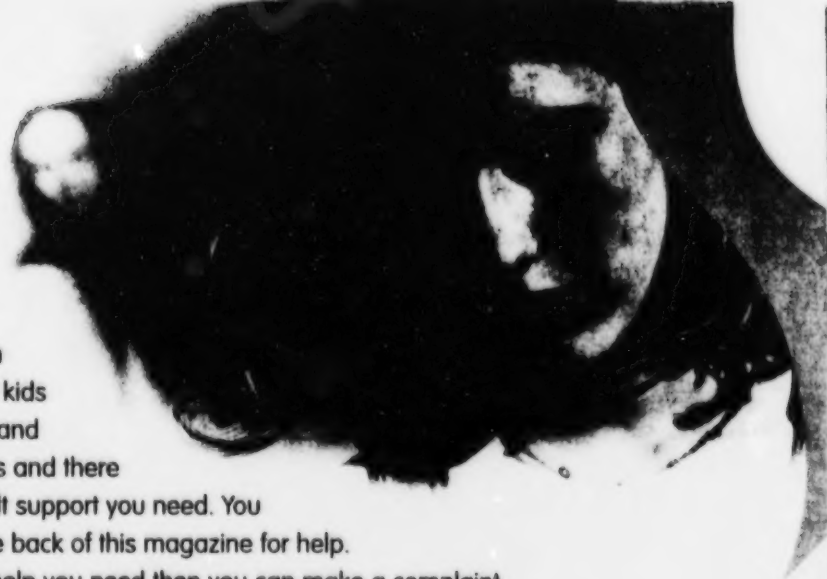
(Grade 8)

*"... Sometimes it's really hard to communicate, for times have changed since they were teens and there is a way different culture now than there used to be. I do not like talking on the phone to them because it always means trouble and I dislike trouble a lot (even though it's not really harsh). I also dislike e-mailing to them because I would rather speak in person."*

(Grade 8)

## Pre-Teens and Teens Not Living With Their Parents

Some of you are not living with your parents. Some of you live in foster or group homes, or with other relatives. A few of you live on the street or in custody centers. All kids and teens have the right to stable and supportive relationships with adults and there are offices to help you get the adult support you need. You can call one of the numbers on the back of this magazine for help. If you feel you are not getting the help you need then you can make a complaint.



### People to Call and Websites to Visit

National Youth in Care Network: <http://www.youthincare.ca>

You can also get involved with the Youth In Care Network. They are a group of youth who work with government to make things better for kids in care of the government. They can also give you neat training on how to run meetings and help other youth. You can call them at 1-800-565-8055.

### Your Rights

All kids and teens have rights! You have many rights that are protected by an international law called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This law describes your rights to be heard, to be treated fairly, and to be properly taken care of. There are a number of organizations working to make sure that these rights are a reality for kids and teens.

If you want to get involved in promoting the rights of children and youth, here are a couple of ideas:

- UNICEF has a "Voices of Youth" section with lots of information, links and discussion groups. You can visit the website at: <http://www.unicef.org/voy>
- Talk to your school. Some school districts have projects on kids' rights.

### YOUTH IN CARE AND YOUTH GETTING SERVICES FROM THE MINISTRY FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

If you're a 'youth in care' (i.e., if you live in a foster home or a group home) in BC, you also have rights that are protected under a provincial law, called the Child, Family, and Community Service Act.

### **As a youth in care, you have the right to:**

- 1 Live in a safe home where you are properly taken care of,
- 2 Know how your needs are going to be met,
- 3 Say how you feel about what's happening to you,
- 4 Have privacy and have your own personal stuff,
- 5 Not be physically punished (i.e., being hit),
- 6 Be told what the house rules and consequences are,
- 7 Get medical and dental care when needed,
- 8 Participate in social and recreational activities,
- 9 Learn about and practice your religion,
- 10 Learn how to maintain your cultural heritage,
- 11 Have an interpreter (if necessary) when decisions are being made about your care,
- 12 Talk privately with your family, unless it's not safe to do so,
- 13 Talk privately with people who can help you (like lawyers or government staff),
- 14 Know who the Child, Youth and Family Advocate is and how to contact her/him, and
- 15 Know your rights and how to enforce them.

### **THE RIGHT TO COMPLAIN: YOUTH IN CARE AND YOUTH GETTING SERVICES FROM THE MINISTRY FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

If you are a youth receiving any services from the Ministry for Children and Families, whether you are in care or not, you have the right to complain about these services. If you are in care, you can also complain about your rights if they're being violated. Here's what you can do:

1. Try talking about it with your worker (social worker, counselor, etc), or their supervisor. Your complaint may be resolved sooner this way.
2. If that isn't helpful, you may call the Ministry for Children and Families (MCF) Regional Complaints Manager. To find out who this is in your area, ask at your local MCF office, or call:  
**Enquiry BC** Toll-free (that means you don't even need a quarter to call!) **1-800-663-7867**  
In Vancouver **660-2421** • In Victoria **387-6121**
3. If you don't agree with their decision, or if they haven't resolved anything within 30 days, you may call or write the Children's Commission (see contact information on the back cover). You can also call the Children's Commission if you are having problems getting in touch with the Regional Complaints Manager.

### **YOU'RE ENTITLED TO AN ADVOCATE**

You are entitled to an advocate while making a complaint, since this may seem like a long and difficult process. Having an advocate means having someone who can support you and help you make a complaint. You can choose anyone you trust to be your advocate, like a counselor or a friend. You can also call the Child, Youth and Family Advocate for their support:

Child, Youth and Family Advocate toll-free in BC: **1-800-476-3933**

If you would like more information about the complaint process, then phone the Children's Commission and ask for the Youth Guide to Complaints. This document is also on our website at <http://www.childservices.gov.bc.ca>.

### **PEOPLE TO TALK TO:**

Children's Commission **1-800-859-1441** • Child, Youth and Family Advocate **1-800-476-3933**



If you are a youth in custody (example, a detention center for breaking the law), the Ministry for Children and Families has a booklet called "Know Your Rights". It gives you more detail about what your rights are when you are in custody.

**Here's what to Do if you think your Rights are Being Violated:**

- 1 Talk to the Director of the center you are in. If the complaint is not resolved, then...
- 2 ...say you want to file a complaint with the Regional Complaints Manager. The center you are in will give you the name of the person to call and their phone number. You can also call the Children's Commission for the name and number of the person to call.
- 3 If your complaint is not resolved through the Regional Complaints Manager, or you haven't heard anything 30 days after making the complaint, then you can call the Children's Commission (see contact information on back cover).

**Your Ideas for Improving Communication with Important Adults in Your Life**

*Hear them out. Don't yell and scream. Kids don't like it any more than the adults do, and sometimes it's the adults not the kids. When a decision is being made, consult everyone concerned with the problem.*

(Grade 8)

*Treat everyone equally but let everyone have their own space and privacy. They need to treat parents as they do children and vice-versa. If you stay together too long and invade each others privacy, they'll wind up getting mad at each other.*

(Grade 8)



**People to Call and Websites to Visit**

Some of you said that including phone numbers and sites for parents where they can get information on communicating with you would be helpful. Here is some information for you to share with adults.

**Parent Help Line**

A nationwide Parent Help Line was launched May 2000, and it offers confidential and free advice by trained counselors. Any parent can call—no issue is too big or small. They also have a website with tons of information on child and teen development and tips for making sure you have strong communication with each other.

24 hours a day. Free and confidential **1-888-603-9100**

**<http://www.parentsinfo.sympatico.ca>**

**Canadian Parents**

This site is one you might want to go to with your parents. It gives some ideas for how pre-teens or teens and their parents can make sure they have strong and respectful communication with each other.

**<http://www.canadianparents.com/library/section1.htm#teens>**

This site gives more ideas for your parents on communicating with you.

**[http://kidshealth.org/parent/growth/growing/adolescence\\_p3.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/growth/growing/adolescence_p3.html)**



# Adults and Kids Together

You had lots of suggestions about how teens and adults could work together so that fewer teens would turn to violence and other self-destructive things.

*I think when it comes to designing schools and parks, etc., kids should have a say, cause we gotta be there 7 hours a day.* (Grade 8)

*In local newspapers, do lots of things about the kids.* (Grade 6)

*Make up a sort of newspaper that has kids who have completed something cool for the community and others.* (Grade 6)

*Hold a press conference where kids can ask questions to the mayor.* (Grade 6)

*Some of the things we could do with adults and kids are to work as a team to be respected and to get along more and do more stuff together because when you grow up you're not going to be around as much.* (Grade 8)

*Some of the things that adults and kids could do as a team to make sure everyone feels like they belong and they are respected is to tell them to join you and socialize with them rather than making them feel left out.* (Grade 6)

*Teens need some group of adults that make sure teens are allowed to organize things.* (Grade 6)

*Well, this is a law and everything, and I am totally respecting the law, but it makes me feel excluded when we aren't allowed to vote. We could vote on smaller things like whether or not we want another ice rink and sign a petition.* (Grade 8)

*We could have a meeting every month and talk about decisions and we could team up.* (Grade 6)



## More Ideas!

*Lower prices for the  
not so wealthy.*  
(Grade 8)

*They should provide a pre-teen  
center for kids aged 10 to 12 or  
13 yrs old.* (Grade 8)

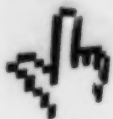


*What we could have done is to have a caring heart and care about everyone  
around you. We could have clubs that does things that everyone could  
do and make everyone feel included and important. A lot of you don't think  
they are not important to their community which leads them to think  
that they don't belong there.* (Grade 7)

## Will Adults Really Listen?

Some of you thought that working as a team with adults wouldn't make things better for pre-teens and teens. You figured adults wouldn't really listen to you or let you have a say in things that affect you. The following people to call and sites to visit will give you examples of youth who have influenced decisions and how they did it.





## People to Call and Websites to Visit

These internet sites and places to phone are run by, or get lots of help from, pre-teens or teens.

The McCreary Center Society does workshops for youth on how to run meetings and events for youth. They have good information on how to make sure your voice is heard. Go to <http://www.mcs.bc.ca/mcshome.htm>

### Municipal Government

Municipal governments decide how much money to spend on recreational centers and city parks. If you want a skateboard park or a pool in your community, you need to talk to these people. You can look in the Blue Pages of your phone book under Municipal Governments to find the number to call in your area, or you can call Enquiry BC.

Hours of operation for Enquiry BC are 8 AM to 5 PM  
(Monday through Friday):

In Victoria call **(250) 387-6121**

In Vancouver call **(604) 660-2421**

Elsewhere in BC call **1-800-663-7867**

You can also visit <http://www.civicnet.gov.bc.ca>. It gives you information on who your local elected representatives are.

### Your School District

Did you know there are 60 School Districts in British Columbia? By getting involved in your School District, you can have a say about programs that are offered in your schools like sports or programs for students who have dropped out and want to come back to school. Ask a principal or a teacher about how to get in touch with your School Trustee.

### The Media

Many of you said you wanted the media to write more stories about pre-teens and teens. This site gives a ton of information on how the media works and how you can get them to pay attention to pre-teens and teens.  
<http://www.cfc-efc.ca/docs/00001237.htm>



# What Do You Do with Your Time?

Pre-teens and teens are interested in lots of different things. Here are some of the activities you told us about:

## Couch Potatoes - NOT!

Many of you volunteer in your community.

*My after-school activities are helping out at the Thompson Community Center with preschool youth, dances and other special events.*

(Grade 8)

## THE TOP 10

- Sports (including biking, skidooring, rollerblading, basketball, football, rugby, soccer, hockey and swimming)
- Computer games
- Video games
- Television
- Hanging out with friends
- Dances
- Music
- Volunteering
- Church groups
- Community groups (eg., teen leadership)

## How I Spent My Summer Vacation

Some of you said that as long as you wore safety equipment and were careful, you could still get injured but that the chance of that is a lot less. Others of you said that you don't wear safety equipment and you don't think you'll get injured, or there is nothing you can do about it anyway.

It's true. Life would be pretty boring if we never took risks, but there are smart risks and there are risks that can end up with you dead or injured. Summer holidays is the most common season for injuries.

## Ideas from 11 to 4Teen Year Olds

*"Well, I know that we and my friends before doing any kind of activities, we make sure that we're prepared so that we don't injure ourselves. Because a safe body is a lot better than an injured one. Some things we could do to be safer is don't be stupid and try stuff above our level. But we should always wear the safety gear no matter how nerdy we look!"*

(Grade 8)



*"...have a plan if you're ever in trouble. Be a good influence for those who are younger than you. You could also start talking to kids about that kind of stuff. With adults, kids usually don't listen that good, but if a teenager or someone they look up to were to do it, it might be different."*

(Grade 8)

*"I think you could demonstrate the risks and safety on commercials, because kids always watch and pay attention on TV."*

(Grade 8)



### People to Call and Websites to Visit

Here are some resources about injury prevention.

#### KidsHealth

This is a mega site. It has information on how to stay safe when you are cycling, boating, swimming or doing other recreational activities. The site also has a ton of information on dealing with bullying, alcohol and drugs, health issues and how to improve communication with parents, teachers and other adults in your life.

<http://kidshealth.org/teen/safety>

#### ICBC

Did you know motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of injuries and death for kids and teens? The good news is you can do lots to prevent becoming a victim. This site is geared to youth and has e-postcards and other neat stuff.

<http://www.icbc.com/youth/index.html>



# Conclusion

I hope you enjoyed this magazine and that it will give you some ideas about making sure your voice is heard. 1200 pre-teens and teens sent in questionnaires, and 80 participated in groups to tell us what information we should put in this report.

You said that you wanted adults to know that you want to be part of your communities rather than be seen as "scary youth" who get into trouble. You said some youth do get into trouble, just like some adults do, but most of you don't. And many of the youth who do get into trouble probably wouldn't if they felt heard and respected by their families and communities. You had tons of good ideas for how pre-teens, teens and adults can work as a team to make sure everyone feels like they belong.

Based on what you told me, I've talked to some people from municipal governments and have told them how enthusiastic pre-teens and teens are about helping to make decisions about stuff like ice rinks, skateboard parks and other recreational activities. They need to hear from you so that you can have meetings in your community and get a voice for pre-teens and teens. You have lots of good ideas—now it's just a matter of getting them heard and considered by adults who make the decisions.

If at the beginning you don't get a positive response, don't give up! Call or visit one of the websites we have listed in this report, like the Youth Against Violence Line, and they can give you some help to make sure you are heard.

You had so many great ideas, and I want to work with you to make them a reality, like getting more stories about kids and teens in the newspapers or promoting the idea of adults and youth working together in teams to sort out problems.

Like you, I have responsibilities and things that I have to do, and sometimes it's hard work. But I also get a chance sometimes to do things which are a lot of fun. Working on this magazine with you was one of the most fun parts of being the Children's Commissioner. Thanks for all of your help and ideas. It was great!

*Paul Pollan*

Paul Pollan  
Children's Commissioner



# Questionnaire

- 1) What did you like about this report? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) What didn't you like about this report? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Do you think there should be news conferences where kids and teens get to ask questions about issues that are important to them? ☐ yes ☐ no
- 4) Do you think kids and teens should have a voice in government? ☐ yes ☐ no  
If yes, what would a voice for pre-teens and teens include? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Do you think having speakers come and talk to pre-teens and teens about bullying is helpful? ☐ yes ☐ no
- 6) Do you feel like you know enough about what resources are available in your community? ☐ yes ☐ no
- 7) Would it be helpful to send out more information about resources in your community? ☐ yes ☐ no
- 8) Do you think having regular meetings with pre-teens, teens and adults in your community would improve communication? ☐ yes ☐ no  
If yes, would you volunteer to participate in these meetings? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Would you be interested in attending workshops on how to work with other teens to influence adults about things you want improved in your community? ☐ yes ☐ no
- 10) Would more pre-teens and teens participate in workshops and meetings if there were contests and prizes for kids who attend? ☐ yes ☐ no

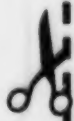
## Personal Information:

How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_ What community do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to get involved or learn more about the Children's Commission, please write down your phone number and address.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please fax, mail or email back to the Children's Commission, or if it's easier give us a call with your feedback. See back cover for the contact information.



# Word Search

- 1) Most of you said that \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the things that you think will be fun about being a teenager.
- 2) Many of you said \_\_\_\_\_ is a two way street.
- 3) You had many ideas for how pre-teens, teens and adults can work together to make sure everyone feels \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) If you want to get involved in anti-violence projects or need advice on how to deal with a bully, you should call the Youth \_\_\_\_\_ Line.
- 5) If you aren't sure who to call for information or help, you might want to call \_\_\_\_\_. It is a free call from anywhere in BC.
- 6) The Youth in Care \_\_\_\_\_ is a group of young people from ages 14 to 25 who advocate for youth in care and try and make things better for them.
- 7) On page 28 of this magazine there is a \_\_\_\_\_ that we really want you to fill out and send back to us.
- 8) If you want a skateboard park in your community you should contact a representative in your \_\_\_\_\_ government.
- 9) The \_\_\_\_\_ has trained counselors you can talk to 24 hours a day. Everything you say is just between you and the counselor. They have a neat website, too.
- 10) If you are being abused or you know some who is under the age of 19 who is being abused, call the operator and ask for \_\_\_\_\_.
- 11) All children and youth have \_\_\_\_\_.
- 12) \_\_\_\_\_ is like being Street Smart.
- 13) The Youth Against Violence Line can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_. It is a free call anywhere in BC.
- 14) Some of you volunteer. You suggested \_\_\_\_\_ is a good way to get to know people in your community and get work experience for getting a paid job when you get older.

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b	u	l	l	y	i	n	g	y	r	k	j	z	x	q	y	r	c	l	l

- ANSWERS**
- 1) driving
  - 2) 1-800-680-4264
  - 3) Cybermarks
  - 4) rights
  - 5) Youth 1234
  - 6) Kids Help Phone
  - 7) Municipal
  - 8) Questionnaire
  - 9) Network
  - 10) Enquiry BC
  - 11) Against Violence
  - 12) included
  - 13) respected
  - 14) volunteering

# Free Phone Calls and Lots of Information

## **Zenith 1234**

Abuse is never okay. If you are being physically, sexually or emotionally abused, dial: **0** and ask for **Zenith 1234**. To use the Telephone Device for the Deaf, dial **1-800-667-4770**.

## **Children's Commission**

Don't forget us! The Children's Commission REALLY wants to hear from you. What did you think of this magazine and how can we make it better for next year?

Also, the Children's Commission is a place you can call if you are in government care or getting services from the Ministry for Children and Families. If you aren't happy with the services you are getting, you can call us. If you aren't sure if it is a service from MCF, just give us a call and we will help you figure it out.

In Victoria: (250) 356-0831 • Toll-free: 1-800-859-1441 • Fax: (250) 356-0837

Website: <http://www.childservices.gov.bc.ca>

Mailing Address: PO Box 9207 Stn Prov Govt, Victoria, BC V8W 9J1

Email: [youth.report@gems7.gov.bc.ca](mailto:youth.report@gems7.gov.bc.ca)

## **Child, Youth and Family Advocate**

If you are a child or teen in government care and not getting the support you need call the Child, Youth and Family Advocate at **1-800-476-3933**.

## **Enquiry BC**

If you need some help or you want to get involved in your community but you don't really know who to call, try Enquiry BC. They have tons of information and it's a free call. They can connect you for free if it is a number that is part of the provincial government, and they can give you the phone number for other types of services, too.

In Victoria: (250) 387-6121 • In Vancouver: (604) 660-2421 • Elsewhere in BC: 1-800-663-7867

## **Kids Help Phone**

If you need to talk to someone who can help you sort out problems and get you the support you need call **1-800-668-6868**.

## **Parent Help Line**

If you are a parent or an adult who needs advice, you can call this free and confidential line and talk to a trained counselor. No issue is too big or small! **1-888-603-9100**.

## **Youth Against Violence Line**

If you, or a friend, are being threatened, bullied or harassed, call The Youth Against Violence Line at **1-800-680-4264**. It's confidential and the people you talk to can give you lots of good advice.

# Thank You!

